

Cost of Living Council, 1971–1974.

Dr. Kosters graduated from Calvin College (B.A., 1960) and the University of Chicago (Ph.D., 1966). He was born August

4, 1933, in Corsica, SD. Dr. Kosters served in the U.S. Army, 1953–1955. He is married, has three children, and resides in Arlington, VA.

Remarks to the Federalist Society of Philadelphia in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

April 3, 1992

May I start by thanking Ms. Aikens for her hospitality, and the hospitality of all those to whom so much history is entrusted here. And what a superb job they do in preserving this lovely, lovely historic place. We're grateful, grateful to you that you are permitting us to have this event here today. May I thank Brian Guthrie, the president of the Federalist Society of Philadelphia, for his introduction, for hosting this. I see Joe Cicippio.

I want to say that Old Congress Hall is home to great ideas and great debate. In this very room, pivotal and profound discussions occurred, setting in motion a grand experiment in man's ability to chart his own future. The vision of the Founding Fathers may be hard for us to fully comprehend. But if you really think about it, their goals were not much different than ours. They wanted their new country to prosper, and they knew intuitively that the road to prosperity was freedom. They believed in the fundamentals, in the inherent strength of family, faith, and they were determined to preserve them. They wanted the citizens of our young Nation to live in peace, safe and secure from threats at home and abroad. It took a revolution to achieve their vision, and it is our duty to preserve it.

They say when British General Cornwallis surrendered to Washington at Yorktown in 1781, his troops marched to the tune "The World Turned Upside Down." It was a profoundly simple recognition that an old world order was ending and a new one beginning.

Now, more than 200 years later, we are again in the midst of great change. Democracy and freedom once again have turned the world upside down. America once again championed a great worldwide movement.

We stood firm for our principles through some very difficult times. We did indeed change the world. Now, as you may have heard me say, if we could change the world, we can change America.

Henry Luce called the 20th century the American Century. In a world more driven by economic competition than ever before, we must now meet five great challenges to ensure that the next century is also the American century.

First, our children must develop good character, must develop values so they can be educated adults, literate, drug-free, motivated to make learning a lifelong pursuit. We must dramatically change our education system, literally revolutionize it. Our America 2000 education initiative means top-to-bottom educational reform.

Second, our people must have a sense of well-being about their physical health. And our health care proposal guarantees access to the finest health care system in the world and keeps that care affordable for all our citizens.

Next, our civil justice system: it must do what it was designed to do, dispense justice for all. Eighteen million lawsuits a year are choking us, costing us billions of dollars, and putting a tremendous drag on our civility and our economy. If Congress passes my "Access to Justice Act," this, too, can change.

And in the next century, economic competition, as well as economic opportunity, will come from beyond our borders. That's why we have aggressive progrowth trade policy. It demands more open foreign markets for quality American goods and services to sustain and create American jobs.

Finally, if we're to change America we must change the way Government works. That's what I will address today. G.K. Chesterton said, "We cannot discuss reform without reference to form." This has been amply demonstrated in just the last decade as one institution after another has been challenged, forced to take a hard look within itself, make needed improvements, and act to make the institution live up to its principles. That is the process called reform.

To ensure their competitive edge, businesses launch reforms that are geared to quality. Then, by measuring performance, they improve performance. Often it's not flashy, the return to old values and standards like "built to last a lifetime," or "service with a smile." Competition works. The proof? Today, look around this great country: American products are quantifiably better than just a few years ago.

Reform has improved performance in our military. In the face of tighter budgets we've cut the fat; we've gotten leaner and smarter. And Desert Storm proved it. The drive for excellence has influenced almost every other institution, from State and local government to trade associations and unions.

Yet, the Federal Government is a glaring holdout. It resists reform and protects a failed status quo, even in the face of an unambiguous need for change. I'm not talking here about barber shops or perks or calligraphers or parking spaces. It's about the governmental process, its potential to help or hinder the public good. It is about big things, important things, major changes to make Government more responsive. It's about the changes that are sweeping the rest of the country but are not being made in Washington.

The most recent proof that we have a major problem was the inability of Congress to rise to the challenge of helping our economy. Instead it reverted to form, trying to raise taxes, increase Government spending. If it cannot address a straightforward short-term proposal to stimulate the economy, how can it possibly deal with the more complex issues like the badly needed reforms of education, health care, legal systems. I would still like to see Congress put politics aside and give me an up-and-down vote on the seven incentives to stimulate this econ-

omy that I have pending before the Congress right now. But if we are to reform education and health care and our legal system and if we are to reduce redtape and regulation, make our country competitive, get this horrendous deficit down, we must reform the congressional process itself. We've got to make it responsive to our country's real needs.

The growth of big Government has diminished the role of Congress from policy making to program making. Promulgating and protecting more programs sets in motion a perpetual cycle of congressional support for more unnecessary spending, creating bigger and even less responsive bureaucracies. Then, by servicing the needs of program recipients, congressional staffs help to ensure Members' reelection and a continuation of business as usual. Beyond that, Congress routinely exempts itself from the laws that it imposes on the rest of the Nation, laws like the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Prophetically, the Founding Fathers warned us about these dangers. Federalist Paper 57 asserts that—and I've just been given this beautiful volume by your president—asserts that elected officials "can make no law which will not have its full operation on themselves and their friends" and then it goes on, "as well as on the great mass of the society." Federalist Paper 52 argued that permanent majorities are dangerously undemocratic. James Madison would be appalled to hear that 98 percent of the Congressmen who seek reelection are, in fact, reelected; that one party, the Democrats, has controlled the House of Representatives for 56 out of the last 60 years.

And that means self-perpetuating staffs. It means a bureaucracy, an inbred bureaucracy, beholden to only one set of leaders. The bank and the post office scandals that have outraged the American people are the results of one-party control: one party's lack of supervision, lack of new blood, lack of change. There isn't the competition to make these institutions in the Congress more efficient.

One-party rule is a big part of the problem but certainly by no means all of it. We've had divided Government before, sometimes during periods of great crisis. And each time we have worked together in good faith to meet those challenges.

The larger issue is the systemic problem of Congress: the sticky web of 284 congressional committees and subcommittees, the almost 40,000 legislative branch employees and staff, \$2.5 billion of taxpayer financing, overlaid with a \$117 million in a reelection war chest for incumbents in these special-interest campaign contributions. None of this promotes reform and change. Rather, it aggressively protects the status quo.

Conscientious Members of Congress understand this. And that's why the Republican leader in the House, Bob Michel, has proposed congressional reform legislation. There's some good ideas there, great ideas for improving Congress and its procedures, like legislative calendar process reform, reduction in the number of congressional staff, reduction of the number of congressional committees.

There are good people in Congress, many on both sides of the aisle, and two of them are up here with me today. I think of your own Arlen Specter, who came up with us, and we talked about these reforms. Talk to him; he enthusiastically supports changing our congressional system because he believes in changing the status quo. Larry Coughlin, who's leaving the Congress—no special ax to grind—had a very good suggestion coming up here about changing the numbers on the rules committee so the minority programs would at least have a chance to be voted on from time to time in the United States Congress.

There's a lot of ideas, good ones, from Democrats and Republicans alike. And then talk to retiring Members, other retiring Members, many of them dedicated people like Warren Rudman of New Hampshire. I'm sure you heard what he had to say. Talk to him, and you'll hear this frustration. And when asked about the prospect of endless budget deficits, he issued this indictment of the system: "The fact is that we are unable, institutionally, to do what has to be done. We are literally not watching the fiddler fiddle when Rome burns; we are

watching the entire orchestra."

Now, Senator Rudman knows the biggest threat to future job creation is deficit spending, and the current congressional structure is not capable of addressing that threat. He knows that Americans are generous, generous people willing to do what's necessary to make this country better. But there's a mismatch between their willingness to help and their skepticism about the United States Congress. They just don't trust Congress to use their hard-earned tax dollars wisely.

Today, Government is a \$1.5 trillion enterprise. But people in Washington frequently forget that the taxpayer is the original investor, customer, shareholder, board member all rolled into one. And when folks in Government forget that, they issue nettlesome regulations. Now, those regulations increase the cost of doing business, but worse, they don't really solve the problems they were designed to solve.

The executive branch is involved. As President, I'm going to keep trying to change the regulatory process. But I will need, because of the legislation, I will need help of Congress.

When Government forgets who is really the boss, the American taxpayer, it becomes insulated, and it becomes unresponsive. But unresponsive Government doesn't just happen. Congress creates these giant, centralized bureaucracies, then lays down the mandates, funds the programs. And then it is the Congress that protects them or investigates them or micromanages them and ultimately perpetuates them. Programs that have outlived their function rarely outlive their funding. With a congressional subcommittee as godparent, some chairman there as the godparent, they become stepchildren of one of the committees of the Congress.

Some 107 different congressional committees and subcommittees claim some degree of oversight responsibility for the Department of Defense. Seventy-four compete for jurisdiction over the war on drugs, 74 separate entities. Just this week, after being reported from one committee in the House, our energy bill, one to make us more energy-efficient, energy-independent, was referred to no less than eight additional

House committees. It should be no surprise that it takes so long to get anything done.

Another example: When the Secretary of Agriculture and his top staff have to testify in 14 hearings in one day, think of the time and resources that takes. Think of the thousands of hours spent by the executive branch to fulfill the thousands of congressional demands for testimony and Government reports. Here's a man sitting right here that used to have to deal with this, Ken Cribb, and he knows what I'm talking about.

Democratic Senator David Boren, committed to reform, summed it up by saying, "No one doubts that the Congress is in trouble as an institution." And that's why I support, as President, his efforts, Senator Boren's efforts, to trim the overgrown thicket of committees and subcommittees which now paralyzes the Congress.

Congress has legitimate oversight responsibilities. We know that. I respect that. We all know it. And I know that the Federal Government cannot be run like IBM or the local convenience store. But we can improve its performance, and we must. What merely hampered us in the past could well paralyze us in the future.

Our ability to compete demands that we make these reforms not just of Congress, not just of the Congress but of the Federal bureaucracy, the executive branch bureaucracy as well. And it means emphasizing the building blocks of a more responsive Government by relying on what works: Choice, it works; competition works; decentralization. But let me be clear, we cannot reform the executive branch without first reforming the Congress. Taken together, the following actions will help make Government work for the people.

First, the Congress must govern itself by the laws that it imposes on others—no more special treatment—like age, race, sex, and disability discrimination laws. Congress should submit to the laws that it imposes on the executive branch, like the conflict of interest laws or the independent counsel law. And I will propose legislation to end such special treatment for Congress next week. And further, I will veto any future legislation that extends such special treatment to the Congress.

Second, Congress should reform its operation and procedures. I support the Boren-Domenici bill. It's a reform bill in the Senate. And over on the House side, Lee Hamilton, a Democrat, and Bill Gradison, a Republican, have that bill in the House which sets up a bipartisan group to evaluate congressional operations and make recommendations. It's a good beginning. But real reform, like that contained in the Michel bill, I think is essential right now. Change is still on the back burner. The American people have got to turn up the heat.

Third, sweeping campaign finance reform. Full disclosure of assets, liabilities, and compensation is a key element of real reform. Now, let me be subjective a minute. I am not required to disclose my income tax returns. And in a sense, I guess I feel like every other American, that it is an invasion of my privacy. But for 12 years I have made public in full detail those tax returns. And I believe that all people aspiring to the office I now hold should do exactly that. On Congress, perhaps Congress doesn't need to go that far. But they should make their existing disclosure rules much more thorough, much more rigorous. The way to solve a lot of the problem is to have the constituent know as much as possible. So I favor that kind of disclosure. Now, beyond that, we must totally eliminate the special-interest political action committees and then put limits on so-called leadership PAC's.

Now, I've proposed ways to increase the legitimate role of our political parties, reduce the influence of the special interests, and decrease the time candidates and incumbents spend fundraising. And let me say it straight out: Federal funding, now pending, Federal funding of congressional elections would only make the problem worse. Real campaign finance reform is stalled on Capitol Hill. But the time for action is long past, and we must clean up our election system.

The fourth one, spending reform: I have already proposed to freeze domestic discretionary spending and Federal nondefense employment next year. And I've proposed 2-year budgets. And I have proposed, as well, to curb the growth of mandatory pro-

grams without touching the Social Security System.

Now, if mandatory spending were allowed to grow for inflation and eligible population only, we could save about \$2 trillion over the next decade. That's where the big expense is. The American people should demand that Congress pass the same measure that 43 Governors have, the line-item veto. And they should demand a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. Obviously, given the financial problems we're facing, budgetary problems, a balanced budget requirement would have to be phased in. But such an amendment is needed now. It will discipline the executive branch; it will discipline the legislative branch.

In the absence of those important measures, I will continue to use whatever means are legally at my disposal, including what I called for just a few days ago, use of the line-item rescission to protect the taxpayer from the spending excesses of the Congress. And I will continue to vigorously oppose any attempt by the Congress to dismantle the only defense that the taxpayer has against congressional overspending. And I'm talking obviously about the budget caps, the caps that were implemented in the 1990 act.

Fifth, regulatory reform: We put a 90-day moratorium on new Government regulations. We are revising and eliminating regulations that impede our ability to compete, and we are accelerating regulations that enhance our competitive edge. Now, since I announced the moratorium on January 28th, the growth of burdensome regulations has already been reversed. And as our review continues we will announce further steps to reduce the burden of unnecessary regulations. But it cannot be done alone; I can't do it alone. Congress, in passing legislation, must be committed to cutting down the regulatory burden as well.

Sixth, we must limit congressional terms. We must address the Congress of the future. The cycle of virtually guaranteed reelection, particularly in the House of Representatives, through the built-in advantages of incumbency have got to be broken. And our Founding Fathers never considered elected Government service to be a career. And I believe Senators should be limited

to two terms and Representatives limited to six terms. As President my terms are limited; the same rule should apply to Members of the Congress. Our first concern should be the country, not the lifetime political career.

Now, this brings me to my final point. Certainly, governing today is far more complex and time-consuming. We have to give that; that's the fact. But not so many years ago, representing the people back home was a part-time Washington job. Somehow Members managed to finish their work and adjourn just before the hot, humid Washington, DC, summers. Air conditioning changed all this. *[Laughter]* And now, thanks to modern technology, Congress sits almost all year round. Many Members of the House and Senate are now permanent Washingtonians. And we do not need a career Congress. We need a citizen Congress. To borrow a line from former Senate Majority Leader Howard Baker, "They ought to be living in America and visiting Washington." I think Senator Baker was right in a serious way. He knew that the overwhelming majority of State legislatures are able to do their work each year in sessions lasting less than 6 months, some of them very short; some of them are about 3 months every 2 years.

With a streamlined committee structure, a leaner staff, Members' time organized around legislation rather than reelection, and better discipline on how they spend money, Congress could return to what the Founders envisioned as a Government truly close to the people. And I suggest that in the future, Congress and the administration work together to achieve a legislative schedule that allows Members to spend more continuous time at home so that they can truly stay in touch with the people.

Change is sweeping America, just as it is sweeping the world. It's exciting what's happening. As in the first days of our new Nation, we must change an unresponsive Government. The reforms that I've outlined today can help renew our faith in Government, confidence in Government. We cannot stop with congressional process. We must reform the Federal bureaucracy as

well, as I am going to have more to say on that in the near future. But today, our mission is to begin restoring the principles of our Founding Fathers and guaranteeing for our children a new American century.

The choice is clear. On one side stand the defenders of the status quo; on the other, the forces of change. And we must make the choice worthy of the men who met here in this room and began the world's only permanent revolution. And now that we've changed the world—we have—we must make the choice to change America.

Thank you all very, very much. And may God bless the United States.

Note: The President spoke at 10:28 a.m. in Congress Hall at Independence National Historical Park. In his remarks, he referred to Martha Aikens, Superintendent of the park; former hostage Joseph Cicippio; and T. Kenneth Cribb, Jr., former Assistant Counselor to the President and former member of the Council of the Administrative Conference of the United States.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the FREEDOM Support Act Proposed Legislation

April 3, 1992

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit a legislative proposal entitled the "Freedom for Russia and Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets Support Act of 1992" (the FREEDOM Support Act of 1992). Also transmitted is a section-by-section analysis of the proposed legislation.

I am sending this proposal to the Congress now for one urgent reason: With the collapse of the Soviet Union, we face unprecedented historical opportunity to help freedom flourish in the new, independent states that have replaced the old Soviet Union. The success of democracy and open markets in these states is one of our highest foreign policy priorities. It can help ensure our security for years to come. And the growth of political and economic freedom in these states can also provide markets for our investors and businesses and great opportunities for friendship between our peoples.

While this is an election year, this is an issue that transcends any election. I have consulted with the congressional leadership and have heard the expressions of support from both sides of the aisle for active American leadership. I urge all Members of Congress to set aside partisan and parochial interests.

Just as Democrats and Republicans united together for over 40 years to advance

the cause of freedom during the Cold War, now we need to unite together to win the peace, a democratic peace built on the solid foundations of political and economic freedom in Russia and the other independent states.

This proposal gives me the tools I need to work with the international community to help secure the post-Cold War peace. It provides a flexible framework to cope with the fast-changing and unpredictable events transforming Russia, Ukraine, Armenia, and the other states. This proposal will allow us to:

- Mobilize fully the executive branch, the Congress, and the private sector to support democracy and free markets in Russia and the other independent states of the former Soviet Union;
- Address comprehensively the military, political, and economic opportunities created by the collapse of the Soviet Union, targeting our efforts and sharing responsibilities with others in the international community; and
- Remove decisively the Cold War legislative restrictions that hamstringing the Government in providing assistance and impede American companies and businesses from competing fairly in developing trade and investment with the new independent states.